

# Our newest church kicks off in party atmosphere

**A**s the guitars reached a crescendo of noise, worshippers thrust their arms into the air and sang at the top of their voices.

Some congregation members closed their eyes, clenched their fists and gently swayed to the music, expressing their commitment to the God who loves them unconditionally.

This was the first Sunday service at Portsmouth's newest church. Harbour Church has been created as a 'church plant' in a refurbished city centre department store.

Around 30 worshippers from St Peter's, Brighton, have moved jobs or started university courses in Portsmouth to form the core of a brand new congregation which aims to appeal specifically to students and young adults.

For its launch service, around 200 people squeezed into the worship area on the first floor above Sprinkles ice cream parlour in Commercial Road. Dozens of young adults, students and families poured up stairs lit with fairy lights to be greeted by a welcome team in matching t-shirts.

Before the service started, real coffee from Southsea Coffee Company and tasty pastries from Bread Addiction bakery were served at a coffee bar that wouldn't look out of place in a high street coffee shop.

Parents signed up their children to children's groups at the branded 'Harbour Kids' table. Friends welcomed each other with hugs and smiles. Music pumped out over speakers as the congregation found their seats amid the atmospheric lighting.

The vicar, the Rev Alex Wood, welcomed everyone before the worship group took to the stage to lead half an hour of contemporary worship, complete with jangling guitar solos and drum riffs.

Bishop Christopher was there to pray for God's blessing on the new congregation, and also welcomed Archie and Sam Coates from St Peter's, Brighton, onto the stage to say a few words.

Children and teenagers went upstairs and separated into four different age groups for games, activities and teaching about God's



Above: worship leader Sam Parker leads worship; above right: Leah Hargreaves and Rochelle Warner enjoy pre-service coffee; top left: Beth Dunn-Wilson welcomes people to Harbour Church; below: congregation members enjoy coffee and pastries; below: Harbour Kids lead a worship song; bottom: the Harbour Kids' team looking after children

love with dedicated children's workers. Teenagers chatted over Coke and crisps, while pre-school children drew pictures and played with toys.

Meanwhile Alex Wood preached about how we could receive God's love, be changed by it, and then transfer it to others.

"We want this to be a place where we experience God's transforming love and show that love to others," he said. "When you are loved, you can love those around you.

"One of the ways we want to do so is that we've rented the retail space next to Sprinkles ice cream parlour and would like to transform it into a coffee shop run as a social enterprise. We want to give young people employment opportunities."

The new congregation included some well-wishers from other churches, and plenty of newcomers who wanted to check out what Harbour Church had to offer.

Among them was Nick Kalfas, originally from South Africa, who has just moved into the area to start work. He said: "I have friends and family at Holy Trinity Brompton in London, and they said this would be similar. It seems like a nice, vibrant, friendly place."

Rochelle Warner, 28, hadn't been to church for a while, but has been looking for one that matches her vision for mission.

"There seemed to be a lot about being involved in the community, which is what we want from church. I've been away doing mission in Los Angeles, so my heart is for that kind of thing."

Her friend, Leah Hargreaves, 34, said: "I usually go to City Life Church, but Rochelle didn't want to come on her own. I'm looking for somewhere where there is real authenticity, where the gospel is shared and where they are reaching out to people who the world has forgotten.

"This seems like an exciting place with a family feel and a real buzz."

Among those who have moved from Brighton is Lauren Meredith, 22, who will start a course in criminology at Portsmouth University this autumn. For the first service, she was involved with leading children's work.

"I moved here two months ago and I feel really welcomed by the community," she said. "The children's work is split into four different age groups, but we're learning the same as the adults – that we are all loved and valued by God."

Hannah McCallum, 22, also moved from Brighton to start a new job, working part-time at Mayfield School in North End. She is also a keyboard player with the church's worship group.

"It was a valuable time for us to do up the building and get to know each other properly before we launched," she said. "Now it's like welcoming people into your family home!"

Harbour Church's morning services started at the beginning of

September, from 10am each Sunday. In October, they'll start their evening services every Sunday at 6pm.

The launch of Harbour Church is just part of our £2.4m strategy to create new worshipping communities across south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight over the next five years.

The strategy, which has been supported by a £929,000 grant from the Church Commissioners, also involves employing a network of pioneer ministers to create new

congregations and to help existing ones to engage more effectively with local communities.

Three of those six pioneer ministers have already begun work, in the Leesland area of Gosport, in the PO9 postcode of Havant, and in Cosham and Wymering in Portsmouth.

For more details about Harbour Church, see [www.harbourchurchportsmouth.org](http://www.harbourchurchportsmouth.org) and for details of our strategy, see [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveservepray](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveservepray).

## 'Exciting to be involved at the start'



Elke and Peter Haworth with (l to r) Sasha, Sophie and Samuel

AMONG the newcomers at Harbour Church were Peter and Elke Haworth and their children Sophie, 10, Samuel, 7 and Sasha, 5.

"We moved to Portsmouth about a year ago and have been looking for a church like our previous one in Burgess Hill," said Peter. "One of our friends liked this place on Facebook and it seemed similar to our previous church.

"We liked the style of worship and also the breadth of the children's work for our three children. We're also pleased that the church wants to get involved in the local community. It's exciting to be involved with something right from the start."

## LIVE, PRAY, SERVE - OUR TARGETS

OUR diocese has adopted its new 'live, pray serve' strategy as a way of articulating how we want to build the kingdom of God in south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Among the specific targets for the next five years are:

- moving the diocese from numerical decline to numerical and spiritual growth;
- developing 12 new expressions of church, each with between 50 and 100 worshippers;
- creating the new Harbour Church in central Portsmouth, specifically appealing to students and young adults, with the expectation that its congregation will grow from 30 to 200 regulars;
- employing a network of pioneer ministers, working especially in the areas that we have found harder to reach, such as areas of new housing, the inner-city and with younger people;
- offering training in pioneer ministry to clergy and lay people across the diocese;
- helping to make the traditional model of parish ministry more effective with specific, targeted support.

For more details about our strategy, see: [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve).

## COMMUNION LINEN

The finest purificators, palls, lavabo Towels, corporals – at affordable prices

Made by Zimbabwe Mothers' Union In support of its outreach work in the Anglican church there.

**MATABELELAND CHURCH LINENS**  
11 Margetts Close, Kenilworth, CV8 1EN  
Email: [matabelelinens@gmail.com](mailto:matabelelinens@gmail.com)

## CHURCH PEWS

### UNCOMFORTABLE?

WHY NOT TRY SAFEFOAM'S TOP QUALITY UPHOLSTERED FOAM PEW CUSHIONS?  
SafeFoam, Green Lane, Riley Green, Houghton, Preston PR5 0SN  
[www.safefoam.co.uk](http://www.safefoam.co.uk) Freephone 0800 015 44 33  
Free Sample Pack of foam & fabrics sent by first class mail  
When phoning please quote PC1016

## SIMPLY

funerals

We don't just arrange funerals, we create memorable experiences.

We are here for you, whenever you need us, 24 hours a day on

**02392 397017**

or 7 days a week at our new Portsmouth branch located at  
24 London Road,  
Portsmouth PO2 0LN

[www.simply-funerals.co.uk](http://www.simply-funerals.co.uk)